10.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

FRIENDSHIP;

PREACHED at the

Wiltshire-Feast,

IN

St. *Mary Le-Bow*-Church December the 1*st*. 1684.

By Samuel Masters *B. D. Preacher to the Hospital and Precinct of* Bridwell *in* London.

6 Eccles. 14, 15, 16.

A faithful Friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found such an one, hath found a Treasure.

Nothing doth Countervail a faithful Friend, and his excellency is in valuable.

A faithful Friend is the Medicine of Life, and they that fear the Lord shall find him.

LONDON,
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To the WORTHY

STEWARDS

OF THE

Wiltſhire-Feaſt,

Mr. *John Eyles*
Mr. *Richard Holford*
Mr. *Paul Methwen*
Mr. *William Gardiner*
Mr. *Henry Lambe*

Mr. *Thomas Phipp.*
Mr. *John Slater*
Mr. *John Rutland*
Mr. *John wayte*
Mr. *Edward Smith.*

AND

To the reſt of my Countrymen of *WILTSHIRE.*

SIRS,

WHen I was firſt deſir'd, by ſome of you, to publiſh this Diſcourſe, I took it but for a cuſtomary Complement of reſpect, to which I intended to make no farther an-

swer, than my thankful acknowledgment; but the same request being since reinforc'd by some others, who might plead, that Friendship which the Sermon *recommends, I was obliged to comply; many Arguments occurr'd to dissuade me, but I thought of this one for my encouragement, that in crossing my own humour so much to gratifie my Friends, I should give one instance of practising what I Preach'd, and perchance gain the reputation of being one who would on all good occasions approve himself*

Your

Faithful Friend, and

humble Servant

SAMUEL MASTERS.

A

A DISCOURSE OF FRIENDSHIP, &c.

Proverbs 17. 17.

A true Friend will love at all times, and a Brother is born for Adversity.

WHen I consider that Nature designed us to be Friends, by making us Countrymen, and that the chief design of our present meeting is to enlarge and indear our

ſwer, than my thankful acknowledg-ment; but the ſame requeſt being ſince reinforc'd by ſome others, who might plead, that Friendſhip which the Ser-mon *recommends, I was obliged to com-ply; many Arguments occurr'd to diſwade me, but I thought of this one for my encouragement, that in croſſing my own humour ſo much to gratifie my Friends, I ſhould give one inſtance of practiſing what I Preach'd, and perchance gain the reputation of being one who would on all good occaſions approve himſelf*

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A DISCOURSE OF FRIENDSHIP, &c.

Proverbs 17. 17.

A true Friend will love at all times, and a Brother is born for Adverſity.

WHen I conſider that Nature deſigned us to be Friends, by making us Country-men, and that the chief deſign of our preſent meeting is to enlarge and indear our

our mutual Friendſhips; I cannot think of a Subject, which may yield a more ſuitable Entertainment than the excellent Vertue of Friendſhip, which tho ſeldom diſcourſed of from the Pulpit, is yet no inconſiderable Part of our Religion; and though very rare to be met with in the World, is certainly a very great advantage, delight and ornament of human converſation.

In purſuance of this deſign, I here preſent you the fair and lively Pourtraicture of a true Friend, drawn by the moſt skilful hand, in this divine Aphoriſm of the Text, wherein we may obſerve,

1. The Eſſential Form or Principle of a Friend, which is Love, a true Friend will *love*.

2. His genuine Features or Properties which are chiefly theſe Two.

1. An immutable conſtancy of affection, *He will love at all times*.

2. A generous Faithfulneſs in the moſt needful time of trouble, *He is a Brother born for adverſity*. In

In the following diſcourſe I ſhall endeavour to draw a true Copy from this original, but more large, that its beauties may be more diſplay'd to your view; and that I may not miſs in the principal ſtroaks, I ſhall keep within the lines of the Text.

1. I ſhall deſcribe that love which conſtitutes a true Friend.

2. I ſhall repreſent thoſe admirable Properties of an immutable conſtancy of affection and a generous faithfulneſs in a time of adverſity, which complete and adorn him.

3. I ſhall review the draught in ſome uſeful reflections.

1. I begin to deſcribe that Love, which frames and conſtitutes a true friend. It muſt be premis'd, that I do not here conſider a Friend in that large Senſe, wherein the vulgar apply the Name to any Neighbour or Acquaintance, that is not an Enemy; but in the ſtricteſt Senſe, as he is denominated ſuch from that particular vertue, which we properly

properly call by the Name of Friendſhip; and of this I deſign to diſcourſe rather according to the Principles of our Religion, than the mean and imperfect Notions of the antient Moraliſts. That this friendſhip is a genuine Off-ſpring of Love, is too evident to need a proof; and what kind or ſort of love it is, which properly aſſumes the form and name of Friendſhip, we ſhall eaſily diſcover, by obſerving ſome of thoſe modifications whereby the great and eminent grace of Chriſtian Charity, brancheth it ſelf into a great variety of particular Virtues, and among the reſt into this of Friendſhip: Such are the various objects about which it is converſant; the different degrees to which it is advanced, and the ſeveral good Offices in which it is imployed: In a diſtinct view of theſe we ſhall diſcern, how love is ſhap'd and determined into the Specifick form of Friendſhip.

1. We obſerve that Love takes up various forms and names, from the various

rious object to which it is addreſſed, as the Sea takes different Names from the ſeveral ſhoars it ſalutes. Thus Love, as it looks upward to Superiors is piety to a Parent, duty to a Governour, and gratitude to a Benefactor; as it looks downward on Inferiors, it becoms mercy to an Offender, charity to the Indigent, and pitty to the Diſtreſſed; as it looks round about on equals, we call it kindneſs; and if among theſe it meets with any fitly qualifi'd to reciprocate the *Offices* of kindneſs, it becomes *Friendſhip*.

The principal qualification which fits a Perſon to become an Object of Friendſhip, is moral goodneſs, eſpecially, that he be competently indued with probity and integrity, with true wiſdom and courage, with ingenuity and Modeſty, with meekneſs and humility, with a large Soul and a tender Heart, with a pleaſant Temper and a cheerful Spirit; for if theſe diſpoſitions be wanting, either we ſhall not love, or our love muſt be call'd by ſome other name

than friendſhip. Yet this is not all, for there will be farther requiſite ſuch a combination of external Circumſtances, as may fit a Perſon for maintaining an actual intercourſe of Friendſhip. For tho we cannot but love and honour every vertuous Man we ſee and hear of, yet we contract our Friendſhips only with thoſe who are plac'd within the Sphere of our acquaintance, who are moſt like us in age, temper and condition of Life; who may be moſt nearly adapted to us as a ſecond ſelf, and with whom we may have the moſt frequent, intimate, and delightful, as well as the moſt uſeful converſation.

It may be neceſſary to add, that tho Friendſhip doth thus contract our Love to a few ſelect Objects, yet it will no way impair or hinder the great Duty of Chriſtian Charity, or make any Schiſms or Factions among Chriſtian Brethren; for Chriſtian Charity can, like the Sun, ſhine on all Mankind, tho it ſtrike on ſome with a more direct and warmer Ray

Ray; or like a well-drawn Picture, it can caſt a look on all about it, not overlooking an Enemy or a Stranger, tho it may have a peculiar aſpect for a Friend, who is ſituated in the fitteſt Place and diſtance to it. The great Apoſtle ſuppoſeth a different communication of Love, in that advice, *As we have opportunity let us do good to all men, eſpecially to thoſe who are of the houſhold of Faith.* And with parity of reaſon we may determine, that we may be differently affected toward our Brethren of the ſame houſhold, as they differently excel in Chriſtian Virtues, and as Circumſtances conſpire to make us a fitter opportunity for maintaining an Intercourſe of Friendſhip with them. 6 Gal. 10.

2. We obſerve alſo that Love aſſumes different ſhapes from the different degrees to which it is advanced; and thus that Love which in a remiſs degree is but ordinary kindneſs and common civility, is by higher degrees exalted up into the fervour of Friendſhip. The Love of Friendſhip cannot

but be thus intenſely great, it being founded on true Vertue; which is the moſt excellent kind of goodneſs, and the higheſt incentive of Love; it being alſo contracted to a few, and mutually reflected, all which will conſpire to increaſe its ardors. And we can ſuppoſe nothing leſs ſufficient to transform friends into ſo near a likeneſs, to incline them to one another with ſo paſſionate an affection, to yield them ſo delightful a complacency in their mutual Society, or to ingage them in ſo many hazards and hardſhips in ſerving each others Intereſts. The Philoſophy of the Antients deſcribes this Love of Friendſhip in ſuch tranſcendent heights, as if it could not only mingle the concernments of Friends in a common Intereſt, but alſo unite their Souls into one Perſon. And the account we have of it from the Holy Scriptures will little abate the *Hyperbole*; *Solomon* brings a Friend as near as a Brother in the Text; and elſewhere tells us, that he will *ſtick cloſer than a Brother*

18 Pr. 24.

Brother. *David* profeſſeth that *Jonathans* friendſhip to him was *wonderful*, *paſſing the love of Women*. And God himſelf, in cautioning *Iſrael* againſt the enticements of thoſe who were like to have the higheſt aſcendent over them, placeth a Friend in the higheſt rank, above a Brother, or Son, or Daughter, or the Wife of the Boſom, and calls him, *a Friend which is even as thy own Soul*. And hence it is, that God expreſſeth his ſingular love to *Abraham* and *Moſes*, by calling them Friends; and by the ſame Name alſo, the incomprehenſible height of our Bleſſed Saviours love to his Church, is ſometimes expreſſed in the *Canticles* and in the New *Teſtament*,

2 Sam. 2. 26. 13 Deu. 6.

41 Iſ. 8. 33 Ex. 11.

5. Cant. 1, 15. John 14, 15.

And I may add, tho our bleſſed Lord hath, by a new Commandment, advanced the common love of Chriſtians, ſo far above all that was practiſed among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, as to become the diſtinguiſhing Character of all his Diſciples; yet ſtill we muſt allow Chriſtian friendſhip to ſuperadd as much to Chriſtian love

love, as common friendſhip us'd to do to the love of Nature. If therefore St. *Peter* exhorts all Chriſtians to have *fervent Charity* among themſelves, how intenſely great muſt be the love of Chriſtian Friends?

1 Pet. 4. 8.

3. We obſerve farther, that Love takes up various Names from the variety of good Offices, in which it is imploy'd; for as it bears injuries, we call it Meekneſs, and as it forgives them we call it Mercy; as it pitties the diſtreſſed we call it Compaſſion, and as it relievs them we call it Charity; and when beſide all other Offices, it attends to the intimate privacies and peculiar concernments of a Friend, we call it Friendſhip. The power of Friendſhip is equal to its love, and as *this* includs all inferior degrees, and exceeds them too, ſo will *that* perform all common kindneſſes, and outdo them alſo. It would be ſtrange indeed, if that Love which can ſhew mercy to an Enemy, pitty to a Stranger, and kindneſs to a Neighbour, ſhould

ſhould not be ready to do as much and more for a Friend.

True friendſhip is the moſt officious thing in the World, it will diſdain no Offices as too mean, decline none as too difficult; it will not only take, but ſeek all opportunities of doing good, and reward it ſelf with the delights and pleaſures of ſuch kind employments. It makes but one exception to this general rule, that it be put on no Services inconſiſtent with that Vertue, on which its very life and being depends. It will engage a Man to do any thing for his Friend, but to commit a ſin; to follow him into any danger, but into no Vice. And therefore, when *Pericles* deſir'd his Friend to bear a falſe Teſtimony for him, and he conſented to ſerve him μέχει τῦ βωμῦ He is juſtly cenſur'd by the Moraliſt, for coming too near the Altar. And in a like caſe the Oratour cenſures the ill conduct of thoſe, who were betrayed by their Friendſhips, into Factions and Conſpiracies againſt the *Common-wealth*. But

But beſide all other common Offices of Love, Friendſhip hath its own proper Province, within which it performs ſome peculiar Offices, which are impracticable to any other love.

Every Man is conſcious of ſome concernments which lie deepeſt and cloſeſt to him, which are too great for his own thoughts to manage, which yet fall under the cognizance of no Relation or Society but this of Friendſhip. He may have ſome ſecreets too big for his own Boſom, which he can no where lodge with ſafety, but in the breaſt of a Friend; He may have ſome deſigns fit only to be intruſted to the ſincereſt Friendſhip; He may have ſome Infirmities, which he dare not expoſe to any ſeverer eye than that of a Friend; He may have ſome inward wounds, which can bear no air or touch, but the ſofteſt breath and gentleſt hand of a Friend; He may need ſuch caution or advice, ſuch comfort or aſſiſtance, as none could, or would give but a faithful Friend.

In

In ſuch caſes Friendſhip diſcovers its own proper excellency and uſefulneſs, in providing a ſafe Cloſet for our choiceſt ſecrets, a Soveraign balm for our deepeſt wounds, in reſolving our doubts, correcting our errors, adviſing our affairs, communicating in our moſt ſecret joys to double them, and in our moſt ſilent ſorrows to leſſen them, and performing all this with ſuch propenſneſs and ſincerity, that even ſelf-love could hardly equal it. Such kind Offices *Job* expected of his Friends, but in vain, when he cryed out, *To him that is afflicted pity ſhould be ſhew'd him of his Friends*; *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my Friends! For the Hand of God hath touched me.* Such alſo our wiſe man aſſerts in ſeveral Proverbs, *Faithful are the wounds of a Friend: As Ointment and Perfumes rejoyce the Heart, ſo doth the ſweetneſs of a Mans Friend by hearty Counſel, As Iron ſharpneth Iron, ſo a Man ſharpneth the Countenance of his Friend.* Thus far I have deſcrib'd a Friend by that

6. Job. 14. 19 Job 21.

27. Prov. 6. 9. 17.

principle of Love, which conſtitutes him ſuch; and that his inward frame might be more expoſed to your view, I have deſcribed his love alſo, by the ſelect Objects to which it is addreſſed, the eminent degrees to which it is exalted, and the moſt uſeful Offices in which it is imploy'd.

2. I proceed to repreſent thoſe admirable properties of a true Friend, which complete and adorn him; they are chiefly theſe two mentioned in the Text: An immutable conſtancy of affection, and a generous faithfulneſs in a time of Adverſity.

1. A true Friend is immutably conſtant in his affections, *He will love always or at all times.* The contract of Friendſhip is ſo ſolemn and ſacred, that a Friend may not violate it, if he would, and ſo uſeful and pleaſant, that he would not, if he might, break this Bond aſunder, or caſt away this Cord of Love from him.

The

The ſlight friendſhips of the vulgar are indeed mutable and uncertain, as that fickle humor or fortune is, on which they depend: but that friendſhip which is built on ſolid Vertue, conducted with true Wiſdom, and fixt in the ſtrongeſt inclinations or Love, cannot but be permanent and pepetual. Such a friendſhip is ſeated too deep to be at all varied with that variety of Circumſtances, which happen without, for as a change of Fortune, like a change of Garments, will make no alteration in the Man, ſo neither will it in the Friend; and he who did not at firſt love his Friend for the ſake of his good fortune, will not afterwards plead the want of it, for a forfeiture or diſcharge of his Friendſhip. If therefore one Friend be advanced in proſperity, he will reach out a kind Hand to raiſe up the other to him, or ſtoop himſelf down to his level, but he will never think himſelf too great for that friendſhip, which is it ſelf the greateſt thing in the world.

Likewiſe, if a worthy Friend fall into diſgrace or diſtreſs, though this may vary the Offices of Friendſhip, yet it will not its nature; it may excite pity and compaſſion, but no ſlight or contempt, it will rather by irritation heighten the love of Friendſhip, than abate or extinguiſh it.

It is true, that the external Circumſtances, which at firſt invited a Friendſhip, may afterwards ſo varie, as to incommode and interrupt its intercourſe, by long diſtance, frequent abſence, different affairs, *&c.* But theſe things are too ſlight to diſſolve that Bond, which even the ſtroak of death can ſcarce cut aſunder. Sometimes alſo Friendſhip may miſtake its object, and addreſs to a Perſon, who afterwards proves unworthy and uncapable of the Correſpondence; in which caſe a friend is compared by *Plutarch*, to one who hath taken unwholſom food into his Stomach, which he can neither caſt up without pain, nor retain without danger;

ger; and though in ſuch a caſe, a friend may lawfully Sue out a Divorſe, yet his ingenuity will diſpoſe him rather decently to untie, than roughly to break aſunder the Bond of his friendſhip. It muſt be confeſſed alſo, that the beſt and wiſeſt friends are but Men, ſubject to many ſurprizes and infirmities, which may too much impair and obſtruct their friendſhips; who yet; if true friends can be very ingenious in excuſing, very patient in bearing, and very ready in forgiving the faults one of another; and if their friendſhips be of the right kind, they will be able, not only to endure theſe diſcouragements, but alſo to ſurvive them with advagtage; like Trees, which after a ſhaking wind take the deeper root; or like skillful Muſick, which can improve the greateſt diſcords into the moſt graceful and delightful Harmony. And though *Solomon* informs us farther, that there are *froward Men who will ſow ſtrife, and whiſperers who will ſeparate chief friends*; by 16. Pr. 28.

whoſe

whoſe accurſed practices the Devil endeavours to deſtroy the greateſt good and delight of Mankind; yet they do not eaſily or often prevail, for true friendſhip will not be ſoon tinctured with jealouſie, nor lightly yield up a Friend to the malice of a detractor, but firſt or laſt, the truth of friendſhip will triumph over the falſhood of the calumnie. After all theſe vain attempts, to vanquiſh the conſtancy of a true friendſhip, we cannot ſuſpect that it will tire or wear out with length of time. So litle is it ſubject to decay, that like our moſt generous liquors, it will gain ſtrength and ſweetneſs by Age. A friend, like a garment, becomes more fit and ſuitable by daily uſe: And that Cement of Love, which time hath ſeaſoned and approved, is the ſtrongeſt and moſt durable. Wherefore our wiſe Man adviſeth us by no means, to forſake an approved Friend, eſpecially not a Fathers Friend, for the older he is,
27. Pr. 10. always the better.

2. The

2. The other property of a true friend, is his generous faithfulneſs in the moſt needful time of trouble; he is *a Brother born for adverſity*. A true friend is, by many excellent qualities, ſo fitly fram'd and provided for a ſeaſon of adverſity, that he is not only able to endure it, but he will ſtick the cloſer, under the adverſe aſſaults of Fortune; and by a generous antiperiſtaſis, his love will increaſe under the diſcouragements of *adverſity*. It was a true obſervation which *Sylla* made to *Pompey*, That more did adore the Riſing than the Setting Sun. And *Solomon* made the like obſervation, *That wealth maketh many Friends, but the Poor is ſeparated from his Neighbour. All the Brethren of the Poor do hate him, how much more do his Friends go far from him; he purſueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him*, There are Friends enough to be found, who are born for proſperity, who will feed on our plenty, and ſhare in our joys; but it is the moſt deplorable fate of adverſity, that when it

19. Prov. 4. 7.

it puts us under the greateſt need of ſtiends, it often put them fartheſt from us. While proſperity ſhines on a Man, crowds of vulgar inſects will flutter about him, to bask in its heat, and ſuck the warm influences of its raies; but thoſe friends are too excellent to be many, who can ſtand firm, and ſtick cloſe to us, amidſt the ſtorms and tempeſts of adverſity. The wiſeman tells us, that he who is become a Brother in the bonds of friendſhip, will ſtick cloſer than he who is ſo, only in the bonds of Nature; and therefore he adviſeth us,

27. Pr. 10. *in the day of our Calamity, to go rather to a Friend, than to the Houſe of a Brother, for better is* ſuch *a Neighbour*, whom friendſhip hath made *near, than a Brother, who* in his affections *is farther off*. It is the peculiar honour of a true friend, that no intereſt can bribe him, nor dangers affright him; that he hath courage enough to make any attempt, and fortitude enough to bear any hardſhips for an avowed friend. 'Give me a friend,

'ſaith

'ſaith *Seneca*, for whom I may die, whom 'I may follow into baniſhment, for 'the reſcue of whoſe Life I may expoſe 'my own. And our Bleſſed Saviour ſuppoſeth the love of friendſhip to be ſo generous, that *a Man may*, even, *lay down his life for a Friend.* And ſurely, that love which is ſtronger than Death, will never boggle at petty miſfortunes. No, *Solomon* tells us, That *many waters cannot quench Love, neither can the Floods drown it*, and leſſer ſprinklings will but inflame it. True Friendſhip, like that Vertue on which it is founded, will grow brighter and ſtronger, by the conflicts of adverſity, and increaſe its Love as fire doth its heat, by the ſharpneſs of the ſeaſon. To ſee a worthy Friend bowing under the weight of an unjuſt oppreſſion, will ſtrangely inſpirit a true generous friendſhip; it will force modeſty to ſpeak in vindication of his innocence, and humility to contend for his juſt praiſes, it will arm the timerous in his defence, and inſtruct the ru-

De amicum pro quo mari poſſim, quem in exitum ſequar, cujus me morti opponam & impendam. 15. John 13.

8. Cant. 7.

deſt Tongue into an eloquent advocate, ſuch is the admirable force of friendſhip, that it will raiſe a Man in the Service of a Friend above what he could or would do for himſelf, yea, oftentimes to poſtpone his own intereſts to thoſe of a Friend, and expoſe himſelf to ſhield a Friend from an approaching danger. Such a friend was *Jonathan* to *David*, whom neither the hatred of a Father, nor the flattery of a crown could corrupt, who would not yield up his friend, though *Saul* with armed fury, ſtorm'd the boſom which entertained him, nor would let go his friendſhip, tho he knew it would coſt him the reverſion of a Kingdom; but with an unſhaken reſolution he perſiſted to plead *David's* cauſe, tho to the prejudice of his own, to advance his praiſe, though to his own diminution, and to ſecure his friend, though with the hazzard of himſelf. Happy is the Man who is ſtrengthened with ſuch an alliance, and provided of ſo uſeful a ſupport,

port for an evil day; who is ſecure of a faithful Friend to adhere to him, when all others forſake him, to condole with him, when others inſult over him, to plead his cauſe amidſt the loudeſt calumnies, and ſolicit his intereſts when moſt deſperate and deplorable.

Having now finiſhed the draught I deſigned, tho with a much ruder Pencil than it deſerv'd, let us ſtand a while and review it in ſome uſeful reflections.

1. If the face of a true friend be truly repreſented in this Text, then the reverſe and oppoſite of this muſt needs be falſe and counterfeit. I ſhould not have made this reflection, but that I obſerve how the many Εἴδωλα καὶ μιμήματα φιλίας (as *Plutarch* calls the falſe Images and Counterfeits of friendſhip) do reflect no ſmall diſgrace on this excellent Virtue. Such are the Mercenary friendſhips of the vulgar, who chooſe their friends as they do their cattle, the ſtrongeſt for labour, or the fatteſt for ſale,

who keep or part with their *friends*, as will make moſt for their intereſt; whoſe *friendſhip* is nothing elſe but traffick and commerce.

Such alſo are the vain *friendſhips* of fond Amoriſts, which ſpend themſelves in ſoft dalliances and imaginary delights; which can no more engage a wiſe and generous mind, than *Sampſon* could be fettered with the ropes and withs of his *Dalilah*. Nay, ſome have not been afraid to prophane the ſacred name of *friendſhip*, by aſcribing it to the good Fellowſhip of Debauchery, to combinations of Fraud and Violence, or to conſpiracies of Faction and Treaſon: Such are indeed, like *Simeon* and *Levi*, Brethren in iniquity, *But oh my Soul, come not thou into their ſecrets, unto their aſſembly mine Honour be not thou united.* But the moſt common and dangerous impoſter in *friendſhip* is the Flatterer, who like *Jacob*, appears in the dreſs of a Brother, and with a ſmooth voice ſupplants and betrays him; all whoſe officious Addreſſes

49. Gen. 5. 6.

dreſſes are no better than the crafty arts of a Fowler, to allure and decoy a *friend* into a prey. But time will diſcover the falſe *friend*, at leaſt in a ſharp ſeaſon of adverſity, his diſguiſes of *friendſhip* will drop off, like withered Leaves at the approach of Winter.

2. If ſo much be neceſſary to conſtitute and compleat a true *friend*, we ſee reaſon enough why true *friendſhip* is ſo great a rarity in the world, ſome have thought it matter of complaint and wonder, that ſo excellent and uſeful a vertue, ſhould ſcarcely be met with any where, but in the notional rules of Philoſophy, or the feigned examples of ſome imaginary Hyſtory: But it is not to be thought ſtrange, that what is moſt excellent and very difficult, ſhould be ſcarce and uncommon in the World. A vertuous *friendſhip* muſt needs be rare, when Vertue it ſelf is ſo. They are but few, whoſe Souls are refin'd with purity, adorn'd with modeſty, ſupplee with meekneſs, ſweetned with kindneſs,

and enlarged with goodneſs; which might render them capable of entertaining ſo great a vertue. The moſt we may obſerve, are too ſelfiſh to love any beſides themſelves, too rugged in their tempers to admit of ſo cloſe an union, too vain and humorſome to be conſtant, and too mean and abject of ſpirit to endure a tryal of adverſity: And hence it comes to paſs, that a *true Friend* is as greatly admired, and as rarely ſeen among us, as the *Stoicks* wiſe man was among the Philoſophers of old. Yet, if the vertues of our Religion were as much in practice, as they might and ſhould be, *friendſhips* would eaſily reſult of themſelves; were every one but fit to be a *Friend*, nobody could be long without one. But alas! in our days, Chriſtian Charity is not only withered in theſe upper Branches, but decays at the very root, and ſo little can we endure the ſtricteſt bond of *friendſhip*, that even the largeſt bond of peace can ſcarce contain us.

3. Let

3. Let us once more reflect on a *true Friend*, to behold in him that excellency of worth, and thoſe endearing properties which may juſtly recommend him to our embrace and imitation. How many and how eminent are the vertues which meet in the compoſition of a *true Friend*? To how many and important uſes will a *true friendſhip* ſerve? It is the ornament of our proſperity, and the relief of our adverſity, it ſweetens our ſorrows and our joys too, and is the moſt delightful ſolace of our lives: In a word, *true friendſhip* is the higheſt improvement of humanity, and the greateſt advance of Chriſtian Charity we are capable of, in our preſent State. What greater vertue could I recommend, or what greater happineſs could I wiſh to you my *dear Countrymen*? than ſuch a mutual *friendſhip*, as would render our converſations wholeſom and ſecure, fruitful and pleaſant as that good Country is, to which we are related. But who did ever diſpraiſe *friendſhip*? or would re-

refuſe a *faithful Friend*? It were well if every one were as willing to be a *friend* as to have one, and would be content to correſpond by that rule of equity.

18. Pr. 24. The wiſe Man gives, That *he who hath friends muſt ſhew himſelf friendly*. And yet it would become a Chriſtian to do ſomewhat more, to importune others with the firſt addreſſes of his Love, and court them, if poſſible, into a League of *friendſhip*. *Seneca* thought every good Man ought to have a *friend* to exerciſe his *friendſhip*, *ne tam magna Virtus jaceret, leſt ſo great a Virtue ſhould be neglected and loſt in the world*. It will much more concern us who are Chriſtians, to make and cheriſh amongſt us the trueſt *friendſhip*, becauſe it is the moſt eminent pitch of that *Charity*, which is the moſt eminent grace of our Religion. Some have been vainly prejudic'd againſt *friendſhip*, as if it were a *forraign Virtue* tranſplanted from the Schools of *Philoſophy*; but ſurely our holy inſtitutions which require our love to an Enemy and

nd a Stranger, cannot be ſuppoſed to iſregard a *Friend*; our religion which ualifies Perſons with the higheſt at-inments of Divine goodneſs, which iſts out *friendſhips* with the mighty aid that *Holy Spirit*, who is the true od of love, which honours it with ſo ny encomiums, and encourageth it ith ſuch great rewards, can do more an all the morality of the Antients to eed and promote the nobleſt *friend-ips*. The Holy *Jeſus* the Author of r Religion had his beloved Diſciple, d expreſſed a particular *friendſhip* to *zarus* and his Siſters. The Primitive hriſtians did ſo abound in their *friend-ips*, that they ſeem'd to have no other nd of love among them; inſomuch at the Heathens ſuſpected them to ry Philtrums and Charms about em, to beget ſuch ſtrong Indearments Affection. And, to add no more, have reaſon to conceive one part of glorious happyneſs of Heaven, to nſiſt in the moſt refined and exalted

friendſhips of Angels and Saints ma
perfect above, where the pooreſt *La*
rus reſts in the Boſom of the greateſt
braham, and all cloſely unite in the ſa
harmony of Love and Praiſe. God gr
that we may ſo imitate their holy *frie*
ſhips here, that we may be admitted
their bleſt Society hereafter, throu
the merits of our Bleſſed Saviour, t
greateſt and beſt of *Friends*, to wh
with the Almighty Father, and the
ternal Spirits of Grace, be Glory a
Honour; Praiſe and Thankſgiving, n
and ever, *Amen.*

THE END.

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